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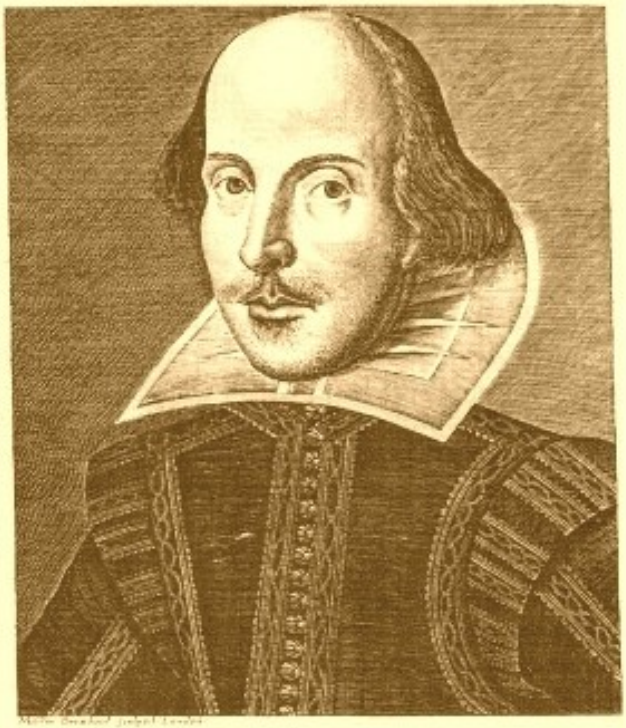

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Mr. CRAD

KILODNEYs

Translations of Wm. Shakespeares
Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies

to Modern English - for contemporary
readers and performers

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Shakespeare For White Trash: Cymbeline

Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney

October 7, 2010 – Author's Note:

"Shakespeare For White Trash" is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you'll be a Shakespeare fan forever!

These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.

Main Characters

Cymbeline — King of Britain

Queen (name not given)

Imogen — daughter of Cymbeline from a previous marriage

Cloten — son of the Queen from a previous marriage

Posthumus Leonatus — husband of Imogen

Pisanio — servant of Posthumus and Imogen

Cornelius — physician

Caius Lucius — Roman ambassador and general

Philario — Roman gentleman

Iachimo — friend of Philario

Frenchman — friend of Philario

Belarius — exiled gentleman now living as a shepherd under the name Morgan

Guiderius — adopted son of Belarius, given the name Polydore; long-lost son of Cymbeline

Arviragus — adopted son of Belarius, given the name Cadwal; long-lost son of Cymbeline

Soothsayer

Jailer

Apparitions (parents and two brothers of Posthumus)

The God Jupiter

British Gentlemen

British Lords

Musicians

Imogen's Lady Servant

Queen's Lady Servants

British Captains

Roman Captains

Roman Senators

Roman Tribunes

Gist of the story: The story is set in Britain in the early years of the Roman Empire, during the reign of Augustus Caesar. Cymbeline, King of Britain, wanted Imogen, his daughter from a previous marriage, to marry Cloten, the Queen's son from a previous marriage. She has disobeyed him and has married Posthumus Leonatus instead. Cymbeline banishes him, and he goes to Rome. A rather sleazy gentleman named Iachimo bets Posthumus that he can go to Britain and seduce Imogen. The bet accepted, Iachimo goes to Britain, hides in Imogen's bedroom, and swipes her bracelet while she is asleep and takes note of a mole on her breast. This false "proof" of his seduction wins the bet and turns Posthumus against Imogen. He sends instructions to Pisanio to lure Imogen out to Milford Haven in Wales and murder her. Meanwhile, Lucius, the Roman ambassador, tells Cymbeline he owes tribute to Caesar. When he refuses to pay, Lucius says there will be war. The Queen gives Pisanio what she believes is poison, obtained from Cornelius, and tells Pisanio it is good medicine. She wants to get rid of Pisanio because he is loyal to Posthumus. Pisanio takes Imogen to Milford Haven, where she expects to meet Posthumus. Pisanio confesses that he was ordered to kill her. He advises her to dress as a man and go to Rome to find out what's going on. He gives her the "medicine" given to him by the Queen. Imogen, now posing as Fidele, gets lost and meets Belarius (Morgan) and his sons Guiderius (Polydore) and Arviragus (Cadwal) and is befriended by them. Cloten goes to Milford Haven intending to murder Posthumus and rape Imogen. He is killed in a duel with Guiderius, who chops off his head. Imogen has taken the medicine and falls into a death-like coma. The medicine was in fact a knock-out drug. Mistaken for dead, she is laid beside the headless body of Cloten. When she

awakens, she sees the body, dressed in an old suit of Posthumus, and assumes it's him. When Roman troops arrive, Imogen asks to be taken on as a page by Lucius. Posthumus has received a letter from Pisanio saying that Imogen is dead. Stricken with remorse, he wants to die when drafted into the Roman army. When he survives, he changes sides and disguises himself as an English peasant and helps Belarius and his sons rescue Cymbeline. Still wanting to die, he changes sides again and becomes a Roman and allows himself to be captured. The Romans are defeated. The Queen has died of grief. Posthumus has been given a prophecy by Jupiter in prison. The Romans and Posthumus (appearing to be a Roman) are brought before Cymbeline to be sentenced to death. Guiderius confesses to killing Cloten. Cymbeline sentences him to death. Belarius reveals his true identity as the banished gentleman who stole the King's little boys, and reveals the identities of his sons as the long-lost sons of the King. Posthumus reveals himself as the unknown peasant who helped save Cymbeline, and Imogen reveals her true identity. Cymbeline grants amnesty to the Romans, Posthumus forgives the repentant Iachimo, and all ends happily.

(Without question, *Cymbeline* has the most complicated plot in all of Shakespeare. And it is incredible that characters fail to recognize other characters in disguise. All the devices and gimmicks in the play are familiar to us from Shakespeare's other plays, but the total complexity pushes an audience to the limit of what they can keep track of. This may be the reason why the play has remained obscure. Also, no one character focuses the attention of the audience. As a result, the play in its original form comes across as something of a mishmash. Nevertheless, our mission is to make you love Shakespeare, and we know you'll love our White Trash version of *Cymbeline.* The name Cymbeline, by the way, was suggested to Shakespeare by the name Cunobeline, who was a king of Britain during the last years B.C. until the 40's A.D. However, there is no similarity between Shakespeare's character and this historical king.)

Act 1, Scene 1. *At the court of King Cymbeline in Britain. Two Gentlemen come in.*

1st Gent.: Have you noticed how down everyone looks–all the people close to the King?

2nd Gent.: Yeah, I've noticed. What's the matter?

1st Gent.: He's very angry with his daughter, Princess Imogen.

2nd Gent.: What's she done?

1st Gent.: She got married against his wishes.

2nd Gent.: Uh-oh.

1st Gent.: I'll tell you the whole story. You know she's his daughter from his previous marriage.

2nd Gent.: Right. That makes her the heir to the throne.

1st Gent.: Exactly. We can forget about the two boys who were kidnapped twenty years ago. They were never seen again, and they could be dead for all we know. So it's just Imogen who's in line for the throne.

2nd Gent.: Right. I follow you.

1st Gent.: The Queen was also married before, and her son, Cloten, is from that previous marriage.

2nd Gent.: Right. Cloten.

1st Gent.: I think he's a prick, but don't tell anyone I said that.

2nd Gent.: I won't.

1st Gent.: Okay, so here's the story. The King and Queen both wanted Imogen to marry Cloten.

2nd Gent.: Which makes sense, I guess.

1st Gent.: Except that she doesn't like him. Instead, she went ahead and married that orphan that the King took in many years ago. Posthumus.

2nd Gent.: Posthumus Leonatus. That's his full name, I believe.

1st Gent.: Correct. He came from Rome, although his family was British.

2nd Gent.: A noble family.

1st Gent.: Yes, very noble. His people died in the old wars for an earlier king.

2nd Gent.: The King should appreciate that, I would think. What's he got against Imogen marrying him?

1st Gent.: He's got no money. No money, no lands, no title.

2nd Gent.: Ah. Well, that could be a problem. Do you want someone like that two steps away from the throne?

1st Gent.: Oh, I don't really care, but that's the way the King looks at it. Now, mind you, Posthumus is a very good guy. And he and Imogen practically grew up together. She loves him. So she married him. And the King's pissed off, and the Queen's pissed off. And all the courtiers are walking around with sad faces because they're pretending to show sympathy with the King.

2nd Gent.: Pretending?

1st Gent.: Yes. They're really on Imogen's side. They don't like Cloten. Or the Queen, for that matter.–Don't tell anyone I said that.

2nd Gent.: I won't.

1st Gent.: Frankly, I don't like the Queen very much either. And Imogen hates her. She thinks she's wicked.

2nd Gent.: Ah, a wicked stepmother–ha, ha!

1st Gent.: You got it.–Don't repeat that.

2nd Gent.: Yeah, yeah, don't worry.

1st Gent.: So poor Imogen is under house arrest.

2nd Gent.: No!

1st Gent.: Yes. And Posthumus has been banished. I think he's still here, but he's probably leaving today.

2nd Gent.: Tsk!–Poor guy. I feel sorry for him.

1st Gent.: I do, too. The guy had a future, believe me. The King had him close to him since childhood. He taught him everything. He got a royal education. And Imogen knows he's a good guy. She's no fool. She's a good judge of character.

2nd Gent.: And she has her own mind. She has a strong will.

1st Gent.: She certainly does. *(Pause)* It's kind of strange about those two boys who were kidnapped.

2nd Gent.: The King's sons.

1st Gent.: Yes. They were just babies when they were stolen. You have to wonder, how could somebody just break in and steal those babies. And the nurse disappeared, too.

2nd Gent.: You think she kidnapped them?

1st Gent.: No, why would she?–It just seems very strange. And after all these years, they've never been seen or heard of, even though there were searches all over.

2nd Gent.: It's a mystery.

1st Gent.: Oh!–I see royalty coming. Let's take a hike.

(The two Gentlemen are going out as the Queen, Posthumus, and Imogen come in from the other side.)

Queen: I'm not angry with you, Imogen. I don't want to be cast as the wicked stepmother. The house arrest is nothing, really. You have the freedom of the palace.–And as for you, Posthumus, I'll try to speak to the King when he's in a better mood, and maybe something can be done. But for now, the best thing would be for you not to cross him.

Posthumus: I'm leaving today, madam.

Queen: He doesn't even want the two of you talking to each other, but I'll just take a little walk so the two of you can say your goodbyes. I'm really sorry that things have turned out like this.

(The Queen goes out.)

Imogen: She's a snake.

Posthumus: I'm not saying a word.

Imogen: I don't care how angry my father is. Let him squawk.–It's just–too bad–that's all.

(She embraces him, weeping.)

Posthumus: And we only just got married.

Imogen: You won't be gone forever. Something will be worked out. We'll be together again–someday.

Posthumus: I'll be faithful to you. I promise.

Imogen: So will I. You shouldn't even give it a second thought.–Are you going to Rome?

Posthumus: Yes. I'm going to stay with Philario. He was a friend of my father's.

Imogen: Does he know you?

Posthumus: Only by letters. You can write to me there. Write me anything. Even if you don't have any news.

Imogen: I will.

(The Queen returns.)

Queen: Best be done with it now. If the King catches you together, he'll take it out on me.

(As the Queen goes out, she give the audience a twisted smile and speaks aside: "I rule the King.")

Imogen: My love, take this diamond ring. It belonged to my mother. Keep it as long as I'm alive.

(She puts the ring on his finger.)

Posthumus: And you take this bracelet. Wear it all the time and think of me.

(He puts the bracelet on her wrist. Then Cymbeline comes in with Lords attending.)

Cymbeline: Are you still here? I want you out of here! And I never want to see you again!

Posthumus: The gods preserve you, sir. I'm going now.

(Posthumus leaves.)

Cymbeline: And you–!

Imogen: There's no point blowing up at me, father. It's not going to change the way I feel.

Cymbeline: You've been disobedient, as well as foolish. You could have married Cloten.

Imogen: I'm glad I didn't.

Cymbeline: Instead you married a–

Imogen: A what?

Cymbeline: A beggar!

Imogen: A prince!

Cymbeline: What's he got? Nothing! How can you put someone like that a step away from the throne? Who's going to take him seriously?

Imogen: He's ten times the man Cloten is.

Cymbeline: Bah!–You've lost your mind!

Imogen: Honestly, I'd be much happier right now if I'd been born a shepherd's daughter and had Posthumus as a neighbour. Then I could've married him and no one would have objected.

Cymbeline: Don't talk foolish. Royals have responsibilities to the position they hold. You're the heir to the throne. Your husband has to be of your social class.

(The Queen returns.)

Cymbeline: She was talking to him. I told you I didn't want them talking to each other.

Queen: Has he gone?

Cymbeline: Yes, he just left.

Queen: All right, then. You can calm down.

Cymbeline: She's under house arrest, and I'm putting you in charge of her.

Queen: Yes, yes, my lord. Don't worry. Everything is fine.

Cymbeline: I'm fed up with her!

(He leaves with the Lords.)

Queen: Just be patient and don't antagonize him.

Imogen: I have a mind of my own. I say what I think.

(The Queen is about to reply when Pisanio comes in.)

Queen: Pisanio, has Posthumus left?

Pisanio: Yes, madam. However, your son drew his sword on him.

Queen: Oh, dear. I hope they didn't fight.

Pisanio: No, madam. Some gentlemen intervened to separate them.

Queen: That's good.

Pisanio (Aside to the audience): Otherwise, Posthumus would've cut him to pieces.

Imogen: Didn't you go with him? You're his servant.

Pisanio: I wanted to go with him, but he wanted to go alone. He said I should stay here and be your servant–that is, if it's all right with her Highness.

Queen: Yes, of course. You can serve the Princess.

Pisanio: Thank you, madam.

Queen (To Imogen): Come and walk with me, Imogen.

Imogen: All right. *(To Pisanio)* I'll talk to you later.

(The Queen and Imogen leave one way, and Pisanio leaves separately.)

Act 1, Scene 2. *Cloten comes in with two Lords. He is playfully striking the air with his sword.*

Cloten: Did you see how I dealt with that bastard Posthumus?–Ha! That was great!

1st Lord: You should change your shirt, sir. I think you worked up a sweat.

Cloten: Nah, what for? There's no blood on it. He never touched me.–Tell me, do you think I hurt him?

1st Lord: At the very least, you gave him the fright of his life, sir.

2nd Lord (Aside): You annoyed him like a fly.

Cloten: He was afraid of me. You could see the terror in his eyes.

1st Lord: Indeed, sir. I never saw a man so terrified.

2nd Lord (Aside): He was amused. He didn't take you seriously.

Cloten: I would've sliced him to pieces if those gentlemen hadn't intervened.

1st Lord: Indeed you would have, sir.

2nd Lord (Aside): He could've sliced you to pieces if he'd wanted to.

Cloten: I don't understand how Imogen can prefer him to me.

1st Lord: Well, beauty doesn't always go with good sense, sir.

2nd Lord (Aside): She knows a jackass when she sees one.

Cloten: Tell you what. Come on up to my room for a drink, okay?

1st Lord: I'd be glad to, sir.

Cloten: Frankly, I'm a little disappointed there isn't a pool of blood on the ground to mark the encounter.

1st Lord: Me, too, sir.

2nd Lord (Aside): Preferably your blood.

Cloten (To the Second Lord): You coming with us for a drink?

2nd Lord: Sure thing, my lord. Gladly.

Cloten: Okay, come on.

(They all leave.)

Act 1, Scene 3. *This scene is deleted.*

Act 1, Scene 4. *Rome. Philario comes in with Iachimo and a Frenchman.*

Philario: His father and I were close friends, so try to be nice to him, okay?

Iachimo: I met him in Britain when he was a kid. I didn't think he was anything special.

Philario: Well, that was some time ago. You may change your opinion.

Frenchman: I met him in France. I agree with Iachimo. He's nothing special.

Iachimo: Just because he married the King's daughter, that doesn't make him a prince, as far as I'm concerned.

Frenchman: And he was banished.

Iachimo: Right. And don't expect us to feel sorry for him.

Philario: Just cut the guy some slack, okay? Just be nice.–Here he comes.

(Posthumus comes in.)

Posthumus: My lord Philario–gentlemen–good morning.

Others: Good morning.

Philario: We were just talking about you, Posthumus. I think you met Iachimo and Doucette a long time ago.

Frenchman: We met in Orleans, sir. Do you remember?

Posthumus: Ah–yes. I owe you my thanks for that.

Frenchman: I didn't want to see anyone get hurt–especially over something so trivial.

Posthumus: I admit I was young and impulsive in those days. But I don't think the matter was trivial.

Iachimo: Was there an argument or something? What happened?

Frenchman: Our young friend here got into a quarrel with one of my countrymen about the virtues of English women compared to French women.

Iachimo: Oh? Ha, ha! An argument about women!

Frenchman: The two of them were about to get into a duel, and I stepped in and stopped them.

Philario: Thank God for that!

Iachimo (To Posthumus): No woman is worth getting into a duel over–or women generally, for that matter.

Posthumus: You are too cynical, sir. I disagree with you.

Iachimo: Look, women are women. They're basically the same all over the world. They all strike a pose of being virtuous. But any woman can be seduced. You just have to know how.

Posthumus: You speak from much experience, no doubt.

Iachimo: Yes, I do. Now take your princess, for example.

Philario: Let's not go there, Iachimo.

Iachimo: It's okay. This is just man talk. *(To Posthumus)* You probably think your princess is different from other women.

Posthumus: She's more virtuous than any woman you ever met. That's for sure.

Iachimo: That's highly unlikely. And, of course, your opinion is biased.

Posthumus: Yes, I admit it. So what?

Iachimo: Well, now, suppose I were to propose a wager regarding her virtue?

Posthumus: What sort of wager?

Philario: I don't like the sound of this.

Iachimo: It's okay, we're just talking, we're not quarreling. *(To Posthumus)* Suppose I were to wager that I could seduce your princess?

Frenchman: Ha, ha! Oh, boy!

Philario: Iachimo–please!

Posthumus: You'd lose that wager.

Iachimo: Would you bet that diamond ring you're wearing?

Posthumus: This?–Yes. Against what?

Iachimo: Ten thousand ducats. That's half the value of my estate.

Posthumus: And you're going to do what–just go to Britain and seduce her? Just like that?

Iachimo: Basically, yes. All I need is a polite letter of introduction from you.

Posthumus: And how will I know if you've seduced her?

Iachimo: I'll bring back proof, of course. And I'll let you be the judge if it's proof enough or not.

Posthumus (To Philario): This guy's so full of himself. I can't believe it.

Philario (To Iachimo): Please tell me you're joking.

Iachimo: No, I'm not joking.

Posthumus (To Philario): It's okay. I'm going to put him in his place. *(To Iachimo)* If Imogen isn't the woman I think she is, I'll give you this ring, and I'll put her out of my mind. But if you fail, not only will I take your money, but I may challenge you to a duel as well.

Philario: Gentlemen, please! This is going too far!

Iachimo (To Posthumus): I'm agreed if you're agreed. What do you say?

Posthumus: I'm agreed.

Philario: Oh, God!

Iachimo: Then let's get a notary and put it in writing. Shall we do that?

Posthumus: That's fine with me.

Iachimo: Good.–We'll see you gentlemen later.

(Iachimo and Posthumus leave.)

Philario: You could have said something.

Frenchman: What should I say? If two gentlemen want to make a bet, that's their business.

Philario: Tsk!–I didn't want this. Iachimo shouldn't have baited him like that.

Frenchman: The young–prince–is too hot-headed for his own good.

Philario: Damn, damn, damn.–Come on.

(Philario and the Frenchman leave.)

Act 1, Scene 5. *Britain. The Queen comes in with Cornelius, a physician.*

Queen: Did you bring me those drugs I asked you for?

Cornelius: Em, yes, madam. *(He gives her a box.)* If you don't mind my asking, just what were you intending to do with them? I mean, em, they are–more or less–extremely poisonous.

Queen: Yes, I know that. I have a knowledge of chemistry.

Cornelius: Yes, indeed, madam.

Queen: I'm conducting some experiments–on the eradication of vermin.

Cornelius: Ah. Indeed. Well–I would be somewhat concerned for your safety, madam.

Queen: Don't worry about it, Cornelius. *(Aside, looking offstage)* And here's the vermin I'd like to eradicate first.

(Pisanio comes in.)

Queen (With a phony smile): Ah, Pisanio! *(To Cornelius)* You can go, Cornelius.

Cornelius: Yes, madam.

(As Cornelius leaves, he pauses to speak aside to the audience.)

Cornelius (Aside): I don't trust her. I didn't give her any poisons. I only gave her knock-out drugs that will simulate death temporarily.

(Cornelius leaves.)

Queen: Is Imogen still pining for Posthumus?

Pisanio: Yes, madam, I'm afraid so.

Queen: You know, you should forget about Posthumus. He's through. He has no future. You should try to remind the Princess of that.

Pisanio: Oh?

Queen: You have her ear now that you're her servant. If anyone can talk to her, you can. Tell her to forget Posthumus and think about marrying Cloten.

Pisanio (Coughs, embarrassed): Ah.

Queen: I have a present for you. *(She gives him the box of medicines.)* These are very good medicines. The King has used them. They make you feel wonderful. They're good for almost any ailment.

Pisanio: Thank you, madam.

Queen: You should think about your own advancment in the court, Pisanio. If you help me, you can count on big rewards. You must try to persuade Imogen to marry Cloten.

Pisanio: I understand, madam.

(Pisanio leaves.)

Queen: Bastard. He's still loyal to Posthumus. Well, that's all right. If he takes any of those drugs, I'll be rid of him. And if the Princess continues to be stubborn–well, I just may fix her a nice herbal tea.

(The Queen goes out.)

Act 1, Scene 6. *Britain. Curtain up finds Imogen alone, looking sad. Then Pisanio comes in with Iachimo.*

Pisanio: Madam, this gentleman is from Rome. He has a letter of introduction from my lord Posthumus.

Iachimo: Your Highness!

(He bows and presents his letter to Imogen, who reads it.)

Iachimo (Aside): She's a hottie. I'll bet her hormones are raging.

(Pisanio overhears the aside but not clearly.)

Pisanio: What?

Iachimo: Nothing. Go keep my servant company. *(He gives Pisanio a coin.)* Go buy some candy or something.

(Pisanio leaves.)

Imogen: Well. My lord Posthumus says that you are a friend and that I should treat you as one. I welcome you, sir.

Iachimo: Thank you, madam.

Imogen: And how is Posthumus?

Iachimo: He is well, madam. *(Pisanio now puts on an act of feigned emotion, embellished with theatrical gestures.)* Ach! How some men have the eyes of apes and monkeys!

Imogen: Sir?

Iachimo: How do apes and monkeys see? What do they see? Do they see beauty? No, of course not. Man can see beauty–or should. But some see no better than an ape.

Imogen: I don't follow you, sir.

Iachimo: Why is it that some men, given a choice between a soft, warm bed and a foul sewer, choose the latter? Why?

Imogen: I don't know.

Iachimo: A man may seem civilized on the outside with all his fine clothes and polite manners, but underneath all that you may find a seething cauldrom of festering pus!

Imogen: Oh, dear!

Iachimo: Vile, demonic lust! Like a subterranean river of lava ready to burst through a crack in the earth and spew evil everywhere!

Imogen: I'm trying to understand your meaning, sir, but–

Iachimo: Do we really know the people we think we know? For instance, your husband–my friend–Posthumus.

Imogen: What about him?

Iachimo: I could tell you, but–no, I mustn't. It would hurt me to say it as much as it would hurt you to hear it.

Imogen: If there's something I should know, I wish you'd tell me, sir.

Iachimo: It staggers the imagination. Honestly. How a man who is married to such a sublime, exquisite goddess as yourself could–

Imogen: Could what?

Iachimo: Could throw himself into a foul sewer–so to speak.

Imogen: Could you be more specific?

Iachimo: Rome has its dark side, madam. All cities do. We call those places–the stews.

Imogen: Stews?

Iachimo: Brothels.

Imogen: Brothels? Are you saying Posthumus goes to brothels?

(Iachimo nods sadly.)

Imogen: I don't believe it, sir! Not my Posthumus. He is as faithful to me as I am to him.

Iachimo: Ah, madam, you are too innocent. Too good. He doesn't deserve you. And you don't deserve to be forgotten by him.

Imogen: Forgotten? Has he forgotten me?

Iachimo: Yes, I'm afraid so. In his own mind he's a bachelor again. In fact, before I left, he had a conversation with our friend, who is a Frenchman. And this Frenchman was very depressed because he missed his wife so much. And Posthumus laughed and said, "Don't be a fool. Rome is full of whores. You have money. Go enjoy yourself." And he even offered to take the Frenchman to a brothel.

Imogen: No! Not my husband!

Iachimo: Believe me, I feel your pain, madam. And your anger. And I know of only one remedy for it.

Imogen: What?

Iachimo: Tit for tat.

Imogen: What do you mean?

Iachimo: I mean, do the same to him. If he's untrue to you, you be untrue to him. It's what he deserves.

Imogen: But I couldn't do that!

(Iachimo takes her hand.)

Iachimo: Yes, you can. Madam, we were made for each other. I knew it the moment I saw you. I could show you a good time.

(She pulls away.)

Imogen: Oh! Sir!

Iachimo: Give me a chance. You won't regret it.

Imogen: No!

Iachimo: I want to kiss you! I love you! Come on, baby doll–

Imogen: Pisanio!–You are very rude, sir! I shall tell my father!–Pisanio!

Iachimo: Ha, ha, ha! Just kidding, madam!

Imogen: What?

Iachimo: It was a test, that's all. You see, your husband praised you so highly, I had to find out if you were as virtuous as he claimed you were.

Imogen: Really, sir!–I hardly know what to say.

Iachimo: I'm sorry if I upset you. Your husband is such a good friend, I had to find out–for his sake, of course. He's only just been married, after all. I wouldn't want him to get hurt. I feel protective towards him.

Imogen: Oh.–I see.

Iachimo: He's totally faithful. He doesn't go to brothels.

Imogen: I never would have believed it.

Iachimo: Your husband's a wonderful guy. Everyone in Rome loves him. Please forgive me. I'm sorry.

Imogen: Well–yes, all right. I forgive you. We shall forget all about it.

Iachimo: Thank you, madam.–Are you feeling better now?

Imogen: Yes. Thank you.

Iachimo: Good.–Em, could I possibly ask a little favour?

Imogen: Yes, of course.

Iachimo: A bunch of the fellows in Rome chipped in so we could get a present for the Emperor, and I'm supposed to buy it. So I've got all this money and jewels and gold in my trunk, and I just need to put it in a safe place while I'm here. I was wondering if maybe I could put it in your room.

Imogen: Yes, that'll be all right. It'll be safe.

Iachimo: It'll just be for tonight. I have to leave tomorrow.

Imogen: Oh, must you? You could stay with us a while.

Iachimo: I'd love to, but I'm expected back within a certain time, and if I'm late they'll worry. If you'd like to write Posthumus a letter, you can do it tonight, and I'll take it with me tomorrow.

Imogen: Yes, I think I will. Thank you. And the trunk will be perfectly safe in my room.

Iachimo: Thank you, madam. It's a load off my mind.

(They leave.)

Act 2, Scene 1. *Cloten comes in with two Lords (same ones as Act 1, Scene 2).*

Cloten: Of all the damned luck! One bad bounce and I lost a hundred pounds!

1st Lord: This is the first time I've seen you lose at lawn bowling, my lord.

Cloten: And that miserable low-life has the nerve to criticize me for swearing!

1st Lord: An insolent bystander, sir. But you showed him.

2nd Lord (Aside): Showed him how ill-mannered you are.

Cloten: If he'd been a gentleman of rank, I would have challenged him to a duel.

1st Lord: Lucky for him a noble can't challenge a commoner.

Cloten: Sometimes I wish I had no rank.

2nd Lord (Aside): I wish you had no rank, too. You're no better than a commoner.

Cloten (Overhearing, but not clearly): What?

2nd Lord: I said, there's no point picking a fight with every commoner who offends you.

Cloten: But if I offend them, that's my privilege.

2nd Lord: Yes, you can certainly offend people when you want to.

Cloten: That's right, I can.

1st Lord: Did you hear a foreigner arrived from Rome?

Cloten: Who?

1st Lord: A friend of Posthumus Leonatus–or so I've heard.

Cloten: If he's a friend of Leonatus, he must be a scoundrel, too.

1st Lord: Well, he did meet the Princess. And you are her equal in rank.

Cloten: You think I should meet him?

1st Lord: Mm–just for sake of appearances, let's say.

Cloten: I wouldn't want to lose my dignity.

2nd Lord: I assure you that's not possible, sir.

Cloten: No, I suppose not.

2nd Lord (Aside): You can't lose what you don't have.

Cloten (Overhearing indistinctly): Eh?

2nd Lord: I said, maybe you can bowl with him and win back your money.

Cloten: Yeah. That's a good idea. I'm sure I could nick a greasy Italian for a hundred pounds.–Come on, let's go. *[Author's note: Shakespeare leaves us with a loose end here, as Cloten never does meet Iachimo.]*

(Cloten leaves with the First Lord, but the Second Lord lingers to speak.)

2nd Lord: What a dumb-ass! And to think he's the son of a queen–especially a queen who's such a crafty devil.–Ach–that poor princess! What she has to put up with! A narrow-minded father and a bitch stepmother. And this jerk Cloten.–If ever a girl deserved a break, it's Imogen. I just hope Posthumus comes back someday. I wouldn't mind seeing him on the throne.

(He leaves.)

Act 2, Scene 2. *Imogen's room at night. She is sleeping in bed. The trunk is nearby. Iachimo climbs out of the trunk. He speaks softly for the benefit of the audience.*

Iachimo: Ah, she's a beauty. Too bad I couldn't seduce her, but I intend to win that bet anyway. I'll memorize every detail of this room.–And I'll remove this bracelet from her wrist–very carefully. *(He removes the bracelet and examines her body closely.)*–Ah, perfect. She has a little mole on her left breast. That's the clincher.

(He tiptoes out of the room. [Author's note: In the original, he gets back into the trunk, but I don't like that.])

Act 2, Scene 3. *Outside Imogen's window, which is above. Cloten comes in with several Musicians.*

Cloten: Okay, you guys, I want you to play something romantic that will melt the Princess's heart.

Musicians: Yes, my lord.

(The Musicians play. [Director's choice: What is needed here is something inappropriate played very badly.])

Cloten: That was awesome. Let's hope it works. Okay, you guys can go.

Musicians: Thank you, my lord.–Good luck, my lord.

(The Musicians leave. Then Cymbeline and the Queen come in.)

Cloten: Good morning, your Majesty–mother.–I just had some musicians here serenading the Princess.

Cymbeline: Any luck?

Cloten: So far she hasn't said a word.

Cymbeline: She's still thinking about Posthumus. But don't give up. Keep at it.

Queen: Yes. Be persistent. We're both on your side.

Cloten: I know. But she's a stubborn one.

(A Messenger comes in.)

Messenger: Your Majesty, the ambassador from Rome, Caius Lucius, has arrived.

Cymbeline (To the Queen): I know the guy. He's all right. But I think we're going to have problems with Rome.

Queen: We'll be polite to him, of course. But remember what we talked about. You're not paying any more tribute.

Cymbeline: Yes, yes, don't worry.–Cloten, when you're finished here, come and join us. We may need you.

Cloten: Yes, my lord.

(All leave except Cloten. He knocks on the door.)

Cloten: Yo! Princess! Are you up? *(He puts his ear to the door.)* Somebody's up. *(He knocks again. Imogen's Lady Servant opens the door.)*

Lady: Who knocks?

Cloten: You know who I am.

Lady: What is your lordship's pleasure?

Cloten: My pleasure? Ha,ha! That's funny!

Lady: Funny?

Cloten: Yes.–You know–my pleasure–the Princess–Eh? Know what I mean?–Ha, ha! *(The Lady's expression is blank and unamused.)* Anyway, is your mistress up?

Lady: Yes, but she's not coming out.

Cloten: Well, just tell her I'm here. I want to speak to her.

(He tries to give the Lady Servant a coin, but she turns her back and goes inside. Then Imogen appears at the door.)

Imogen: What was that godawful racket before?

Cloten: Just some music–to cheer you up, eh?

Imogen: I thought some cats were being tortured.

Cloten: Ha, ha, ha! That's a good one! You're so funny!

Imogen: What do you want?

Cloten: Aw, come on, baby, you know I love you.

Imogen: You're wasting your time, Cloten.

Cloten: I won't take no for an answer.

Imogen: You know, honestly, I wish you would get lost. I'm already married, and even if I weren't, I'd have no interest in you.

Cloten: Your mind is confused. That's your problem. You're obsessed with that–that man–whose name I refuse to speak. And he's never coming back, so why don't you face it?

Imogen: You're really exhausting my patience now. I'm starting to get angry.

Cloten: You're a disobedient daughter. Your father is very angry with you.

Imogen: I don't care if my father is angry.

Cloten: You can have the marriage annulled. It was a mistake. That guy is a nobody. He's a low-down slave. He's got nothing. Your father doesn't want him a step away from the throne, and neither does my mother. And neither do I. That guy is unfit to shine my shoes.

Imogen: Is that so?

Cloten: Yes.

Imogen: My Posthumus is so much better than you that his oldest suit of clothes is more manly in my eyes than you are.

Cloten: You're crazy! And to hell with him! I hope he drowns in a sewer of shit!

Imogen (Seeing Pisanio): Oh, Pisanio!

(Pisanio comes in.)

Pisanio: Yes, madam?

Imogen: I seem to have lost my bracelet. I'm sure I wore it to bed, and now I can't find it anywhere.

Pisanio: Oh, dear. What can I do?

Imogen: Would you go inside and help my lady Dorothy look for it?

Pisanio: Of course, madam. Don't worry, we'll find it.

(Pisanio goes in the house. [Author's note: Shakespeare isn't clear about this stage direction, but logically the only place for them to look is in the house.])

Cloten: Madam, I am very offended. And I'm going to tell your father what you said.

Imogen: Tell your mother, too, while you're at it. I have nothing more to say to you. Good day.

(Imogen goes inside and closes the door.)

Cloten: That bitch! I swear! What a bloody insult! I'm not going to forget this!

(He leaves.)

Act 2, Scene 4. *Rome. Posthumus and Philario come in. A conversation is in progress.*

Posthumus: I'm still hoping the King will change his mind and let me come back.

Philario: Have you written to him?

Posthumus: Not yet. I think I should let some time go by. I guess you're stuck with me indefinitely.

Philario: That's all right. You can stay as long as you like. I'm glad to have you.

Posthumus: Thank you.

Philario: Speaking of your king, he should be receiving Caius Lucius by now–the Emperor's ambassador.

Posthumus: Ah. The Emperor's ambassador.

Philario: A little matter of unpaid tribute. You know about it, I suppose.

Posthumus: It's common knowledge. I don't think he'll pay. The Queen doesn't want him to pay, and he generally listens to her.

Philario: Our Emperor Augustus believes he will pay–otherwise there'll be war.

Posthumus: I don't have any interest in politics, but I can tell you the mood in Britain is that they're not afraid of a war with Rome.

Philario: I'm sure they're not afraid. But do they have the skill for war? The last time, against Julius Caesar, they didn't do too well.

Posthumus: That was then. The Brits are more disciplined now.

Philario: I'll take your word for it. But Augustus is going to want his tribute. He's Julius Caesar's nephew. He's tough like his uncle.

Posthumus: Tough, meaning a big ego.–And speaking of big egos–

(Iachimo comes in, smiling.)

Iachimo: Greetings! Greetings! Greetings!

Posthumus: Well, that was fast. What did you do–fly? Or did she kick your ass all the way from Britain?

Iachimo: Ha, ha, ha!–No, she didn't kick me. The Princess was very nice. We got along well.–Oh–I've got a letter for you.

(Iachimo gives Posthumus the letter from Imogen, which he reads to himself.)

Philario: Did you see Caius Lucius, the ambassador?

Iachimo: They were expecting him, but I left before he arrived.

Posthumus: Everything's fine in Britain *(Indicating the letter)*–so I guess my diamond ring is staying on my finger.

Iachimo: Ah!–The ring.–No, I'm afraid you'll have to give it up. Although I confess that after spending a night with your princess, the pleasure I derived was worth the trip even without the ring.

Posthumus: You liar. You're so full of shit, Iachimo. You didn't sleep with her. I won your money, and I just may give you a beating for the hell of it.

Iachimo: Now, you mustn't be angry with me. We made a wager, and I only did what you agreed to let me do and what she wanted me to do. And furthermore, I've actually done you a favour. You didn't know the truth about her before, but now you do, thanks to me.

Posthumus (To Philario): Do you believe this clown? *(To Iachimo)* I believe there's a little matter of proof. Remember?

Iachimo: Yes. I have proof.

Posthumus: You have proof? Okay, let's hear it–or see it.

Iachimo: Well, first of all, I can describe her bedroom. She's got a big wall tapestry relating the story of Cleopatra.

Posthumus: Yeah, so what? What else?

Iachimo: The fireplace and chimney are on the south side of the room. And there's a metalwork sculpture of the goddess Diana.

Posthumus: You could have found that out.

Iachimo: The ceiling is painted with golden angels. And there are two matching figures of Cupid on both sides of the fireplace.

Posthumus: So you can describe her room. Big deal.

(Iachimo produces the bracelet.)

Iachimo: I think you recognize this.

(Posthumus is shocked and hesitates before replying.)

Posthumus: How did you get that?

Iachimo: She gave it to me–as a token of love.

Posthumus: Maybe she told you to give it to me.

Iachimo: If that were the case, she'd say so in her letter. Does she say anything about it?

Posthumus: No.

(At this point, Philario, disturbed by the conversation, jumps in nervously.)

Philario: Perhaps the Princess lost it and you found it.

Iachimo (Ignoring him): So, are you convinced, or do you want one last proof? And I really hate to tell you, but I will if you insist.

Posthumus: Tell me.

Iachimo: She has a little mole on her left breast.–Right here *(He indicates).*

(Posthumus is stunned, speechless. He turns away and stares at the ground for a long moment. Then he takes off his ring and gives it to Iachimo, slapping it into his palm with some force.)

Posthumus: Take it!–I don't want it.–And I never want to see her again.

Philario: Oh, Posthumus, don't say that. There could be some explanation–

Posthumus: Explanation? Sure, there's an explanation. I've been fucking blind. That's the explanation.

Philario: Oh, Posthumus–

Posthumus: They're all the same, aren't they? Lying bitches!–Look at my back! See the knife? It won't kill me. I'll just feel it till the day I die.–That fucking bitch!

(He walks out angrily.)

Philario: I hope you're happy now. You got his ring, and you tore his guts out.

Iachimo: It was a fair wager. You were a witness.

Philario: Now I'm going to worry about him.

(Philario starts to walk out, then pauses as if to say something to Iachimo, then changes his mind and continues out. Iachimo follows.)

Act 2, Scene 5. *This scene is deleted.*

Act 3, Scene 1. *The King's court in Britain. Coming in from one side are Cymbeline, the Queen, Cloten, and Lords; from the other side, Caius Lucius and (his) Attendants.*

Cymbeline: Caius Lucius.

Lucius: Your Majesty.

Cymbeline: And what is your emperor's business with us–as if I couldn't guess?

Lucius: My lord, as you are aware, your uncle, King Cassibelan, signed an agreement with Julius Caesar, which provided that Britain should pay Rome an annual tribute of three thousand pounds. You have fallen behind in that obligation.

Queen: We haven't fallen behind. We've simply stopped paying.

Cloten: Your emperor can blow it out his ass! I'll fight him myself if he wants to take me on!

Cymbeline: Take it easy.

Cloten: You Italians have big noses! We don't like you! Fuck off!

Cymbeline: Son, he's an ambassador. *(To Lucius)* He's a good kid, really.–The point is, sir, that Britain is a country just as Rome is a country, and Rome is not the boss of us any more.

Cloten: That's right! No more tribute for Rome! Fuck off and die!

Cymbeline: Calm yourself, boy.

(Lucius clears his throat in annoyance.)

Lucius: My lord Cymbeline, the Emperor Augustus Caesar has more kings as his servants than you have servants. If you refuse to pay, then I am authorized to tell you that our countries will be at war. I wish it were not so. I have always personally liked you.

Cymbeline: I feel the same about you, Lucius. You're welcome to stay a day or two before you return to Rome. But my answer to your emperor has been given.

Lucius: So be it, my lord.

(They all walk out together, very dignified, except Cloten, who makes a rude face behind Lucius's back.)

Act 3, Scene 2. *Britain. Pisanio comes in slowly, reading a letter and frowning. He speaks directly to the audience.*

Pisanio: I don't f'-in believe this. This is from Posthumus. He says Imogen is a slut. He says she's ruined his life.–Imogen?–A slut?–That girl is as pure as a snowflake.–And he wants her dead.–I swear, the guy's lost his mind.–And he wants me to kill her.–Can you imagine?–He says I should take her to Wales and kill her there.–There's another letter. *(He shows it.)*–And I'm supposed to give it to her. He says when she reads this letter she'll go with me.–If I didn't know his handwriting, I'd swear this has to be a hoax.–Something weird must have happened in Rome. I just don't know what to make of this.

(Imogen comes in.)

Imogen: Pisanio, did you get a letter?

Pisanio: Em–yes.

Imogen: From Posthumus?

Pisanio: Em–yes.–And this one's for you.

(He gives her the letter. She opens it and reads it to herself, looking happy and excited.)

Imogen: He says he'll be waiting for me in Wales! Milford Haven! He misses me! He loves me!–Pisanio, can you take me?

Pisanio: Em–I suppose I could. It's a long way, though. Are you sure you want to go?

Imogen: Of course, I want to go. Don't be silly. You'll take me there.

Pisanio: If you insist.

Imogen: How do I get away, though? *(Thinks)* Listen, go to my rooms and tell my lady she's to go home for a few days. She's going to take sick leave.

Pisanio: Is she sick?

Imogen: No. She's to pretend she's sick if anyone asks. Then I want you to collect whatever riding gear I'll need for the trip.

(Pisanio hesitates.)

Pisanio: Are you quite sure, madam?

Imogen: Of course, I'm sure. If I don't go now, how do I know when I'll see him again? Now, go on. Just do as I say.–Oh, I can't wait to see him!

Pisanio: Yes, madam.

(They go out seaparately, Pisanio looking gloomy.)

Act 3, Scene 3. *A cottage in Wales. (In Shakespeare's original, it's a cave, but that's just too stupid. These people are living simply, but they are not barbarians or outlaws.–Director, it's a cottage, and don't argue with me!) Curtain up finds Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus seated, dressed as shepherds. (Note: These are their secret true identities and will be their speech prefixes throughout the play.)*

Belarius: Ah, this is the life, eh, boys? Being shepherds in Wales.

(Guiderius and Arviragus grunt halfheartedly.)

Belarius: We have our sheep. We have the beauties of nature–the sky, the trees , the flowers–

Guiderius: The streams, the birds, et cetera–

Arviragus: Insects, fungi–what else?

Guiderius: Clouds.

Arviragus: Yes, clouds. And fog–weather permitting.

Belarius: At night you see more stars than you can count. You can watch the seasons pass, year after year.

Guiderius: Year after year.

Belarius: It's a peaceful life. No troubles. And no bosses.–Just me, ha!

Guiderius: It's boring, that's what it is.

Arviragus: You can say that again.

Belarius: Oh! What's the matter?

Arviragus: Dad, we've never been anywhere. We've never done anything.

Belarius: We have our sheep. We hunt. I tell stories. What else do you want? We have a roof over our heads. We have what we need.

Guiderius: Dad, there's a whole world out there. We haven't seen any of it. Guys our age should be doing all kinds of stuff–traveling, seeing things, meeting lots of people–

Arviragus: Having some adventure. Having an interesting life.

Belarius: Bah!

Guiderius: The city! That's where things happen.

Arviragus: Right! The city!

Guiderius: We could see all kinds of stuff. We could learn. We could advance ourselves. Maybe get rich.

Arviragus: That's right, dad. Nothing's ever going to change for us out here. It'll just be the same, old thing, year after year.

Belarius: Now, listen, boys. We have the best life right here. I used to live in the city long ago. I knew the King himself–King Cymbeline.

Guiderius and Arviragus: We know.

Belarius: I tell you, the city is full of wicked people. Liars. Thieves. Schemers. Who's your friend? Who's your enemy? You never know. You're surrounded by dirty politics. And you don't have any real freedom. You have to know your place. You have to be careful what you say and how you say it. There's always somebody telling you what to do. Everybody's obsessed with power, status, and money. And when you take a deep breath, you can smell the corruption.

Guiderius: We've heard this speech before.

Belarius: So I'm telling it again.–I used to be close to the King. He liked me. And my enemies didn't like the fact that he liked me. So they slandered me. They said I was a traitor. They said I was on the side of the Romans.–The Romans!–Me!–And he believed them–because they were–gentlemen!–And what happened? I got banished. I was totally innocent, totally loyal, and I got banished.

Guiderius: We know. You've told us before.

Arviragus: We're not trivializing it. It must have been pretty bad. But it's, like, you know, old history.

Belarius: All right, then. Forget about it. Go out and check on the sheep. I'll be out in a minute.

(Guiderius and Arviragus go out. Belarius speaks directly to the audience.)

Belarius: My two sons, Polydore and Cadwal. Polydore is the older one. As far as they know, I'm their natural father, and they know me as Morgan. My late wife, Euriphile, they assume was their natural mother. But in fact, neither of us was their true parent. They are actually the sons of King Cymbeline. Polydore is really Guiderius, and Cadwal is really Arviragus. And I'm really Belarius. When Cymbeline banished me, I was so angry I stole the boys. They were just babies. That was twenty years ago. Euriphile was their nurse. She loved me. I said, "Let's go to Wales. We'll take the boys, I'll marry you, we'll raise them as our own sons, and we'll have a happy life." So that's what happened. And to this day, the boys don't know they're actually princes. Now, you mustn't think too harshly of me. It's true that I acted out of revenge, but I always intended to do right by those boys. My wife and I devoted ourselves to them. I wanted to give them an honest, simple life in healthy surroundings. We've been shepherds. It's an honest living. And they're good boys. A father couldn't ask for better sons. I want them to be my comfort in my old age. And I don't want to see them get corrupted by city life. *(A hunting horn is heard.)* Oh!–They're hunting–ha, ha! I'll go see if they've caught anything.

(He leaves.)

Act 3, Scene 4. *Wales. Pisanio and Imogen come in.*

Imogen: Is this the place? Where are we?

Pisanio: This is the place, madam. We're near the port of Milford Haven.

Imogen: Why isn't Posthumus here? He said he'd meet me.

(Pause.)

Pisanio: He won't be here, madam.

Imogen: What do you mean, he won't be here? *(Pisanio looks away, embarrassed.)* What's going on, Pisanio?

Pisanio: I so much hate to tell you, madam.

Imogen: Tell me what? Pisanio, tell me. What's going on?

Pisanio: Posthumus sent me this letter. I'll let you read it.

(He gives her the letter. Imogen reads it silently, her face showing shock and distress.)

Imogen: He accuses me of infidelity? He told you to bring me out here to murder me?

Pisanio: Of course, I'm not going to, madam. He's lost his mind.–Or something's happened. I don't know.

Imogen: This letter is a knife in my heart.

Pisanio: I knew it would be. I didn't want to bring you.

(She takes his sword from his belt and tries to put it in his hand.)

Imogen: Here. Do what he told you. I'm already dead.

Pisanio: No, madam.

(He takes the sword back.)

Imogen: I have no life. If he wants me dead, I have nothing to live for.

Pisanio: Don't talk foolish now, madam.

Imogen: Why did you bring me here? You could have told me in London.

Pisanio: That would've been worse. Everyone would've known.

Imogen: What am I supposed to do now?

Pisanio: Well, I've been thinking it over. If I send word to Posthumus that I've killed you, he may be stricken with remorse. We don't know what's going on in Rome. Did something happen to him? Did somebody tell him something? We have no way of knowing. But for now, let him think I've carried out his instructions.

Imogen: And then what?

Pisanio: You've got to go to Rome. You may have been missed by now back in London, and if you go back there now, you won't have a good explanation, and you'll be in trouble. The only thing to do is to go to Rome and try to find out what's going on.

Imogen: How am I supposed to get there without being recognized?

Pisanio: I have a plan. The Roman ambassador, Caius Lucius, will be returning to Rome by boat. He'll be leaving from Milford Haven. Probably tomorrow. *[Author's note: Shakespeare disregards geography — something we've seen before in his plays. There is no reason why Lucius would go to Wales to get a boat back to Rome. Just look at a map. Neither text that I worked from — Signet or Folger — makes any comment about this.]* You'll disguise yourself as a man and get him to take you along as a servant. His page, let's say. I brought you some men's clothing. Once you get to Rome, hopefully you can find out what's going on with Posthumus. Of course, you've got to be convincing as a man.

Imogen: I'll manage it. If I have to, I will.

Pisanio: Oh, before I forget. *(He takes out the box of medicines given to him by the Queen and gives it to Imogen.)* The Queen gave me these medicines as a gift. She said they're good for almost anything. The King has used them. They'll make you feel good. You should keep them handy in case you get sick. That way, you won't have to ask for a doctor and risk compromising your disguise.

Imogen: Thank you. You seem to have thought of everything. What will you tell them when you get back to London?

Pisanio: I'll play it by ear. Don't worry. I just want you to be all right, madam. I'll pray for you. The gods will protect you. Somehow it'll work out.

Imogen: Thank you, Pisanio.

(They go out.)

Act 3, Scene 5. *The King's court in Britain. Coming in are Cymbeline, the Queen, Cloten, Lucius, and British Lords and Attendants, and Roman Attendants.*

Cymbeline: Have a safe trip back to Rome, Lucius.

Lucius: Thank you, my lord. You and the Queen have been generous hosts. I'm sorry that our business has turned out as it has. I was hoping for a different outcome.

Cymbeline: The outcome is the way our people want it. They agree with me.

Lucius: Yes. Quite so.–May I have a safe escort to Milford Haven?

Cymbeline: Of course. My lords will escort you.

Lucius (To Cloten): May I shake your hand as a friend, sir?

(Cloten accepts the handshake reluctantly.)

Cloten: For the last time, sir. After this, we are enemies.

Lucius (To the Queen): Madam, good health and long life to you.

Queen: And to you as well, Ambassador.

Lucius: Thank you.–Goodbye, your Majesty.

(Lucius and Cymbeline shake hands.)

Cymbeline: Goodbye, Lucius.

(Lucius and his Attendants leave with the Lords.)

Cloten: We showed him, didn't we?

Cymbeline: The Emperor will know what's what before Lucius gets there. He sent a messenger on ahead of him. The Romans will be organizing their forces immediately.

Queen: We must do the same.

Cymbeline: I've already alerted the commanders.–Say, what's become of Imogen? I haven't seen her for days.

Queen: She's probably sulking in her rooms. I guess she's still angry.

Cymbeline (To an Attendant): Go see if the Princess is in her rooms.

Attendant: Yes, my lord.

(The Attendant goes out.)

Queen: Try not to quarrel with her. Just be patient.

Cymbeline: Have you seen her lately?

Queen: The last time I knocked on her door a few days ago she said she had a cold and just wanted to be left alone.

Cymbeline: Really? That's strange. I hope it's not serious.–Have you seen her, Cloten?

Cloten: Not lately.

(The Attendant returns, agitated.)

Attendant: She's not there, my lord! Her chambers are empty!

Cymbeline: What! What about her lady?

Attendant: She's not there, sir.

Queen: What about Pisanio? Has anyone seen him?

Cloten: I haven't seen him either, come to think of it.

Cymbeline: I hope she hasn't run away.–Cloten, you come with me. *(To the Attendants)* Search the palace. And the grounds.

(Cymbeline and Cloten go out one way, and the Attendants go out the other way.)

Queen: Pisanio.–With any luck, he's taken those drugs and we're rid of him. And as for the Princess, maybe she's run away to Rome. That's fine with me. With a war about to break out, she'll probably get locked up. And the King will be so pissed off he'll disinherit her for sure. That means–my Cloten will be the next king!

(Cloten returns.)

Cloten: She's gone. There's no doubt of it.

Queen: Ah. Indeed.

Cloten: The King's furious. Maybe you should go calm him down.

Queen: Yes. Good idea.

(The Queen goes out.)

Cloten: That bitch Imogen! She's probably run off to be with that fucking Posthumus. I can't believe she loves him and she hates me.–Well, to hell with her! I hate her!–I'll fix the two of them if I ever get the chance.

(Pisanio comes in. Cloten immediately grabs him by the collar and shakes him.)

Cloten: You slave! Where is she?

Pisanio: Please, sir! You're hurting me!

Cloten: Is she with Posthumus? Tell me! You know where she is!

Pisanio: Sir! Please!

Cloten: You villain! You'd better tell me what you know or I'll have you executed for treason!

Pisanio: Please, sir!–This letter is all I know.

(Pisanio gives Cloten the letter — i.e., the one from Posthumus to Imogen promising to meet her in Milford Haven. Cloten reads it to himself.)

Cloten: Is this true? Did she go to Milford to meet Posthumus?

Pisanio: I believe so, sir.

Cloten: This is his handwriting. He says he'll meet her there. Obviously, that's where she went. You knew about this, didn't you?

Pisanio: She swore me to secrecy, sir. As her servant, I was bound to obey. Your mother would agree, I'm sure.

(Cloten assumes a calmer, friendlier demeanor. He smooths down Pisanio's collar.)

Cloten: It's all right, Pisanio. You're not in any trouble–as long as you help me. The Princess is gone, so you're my servant now. You'll do what I tell you–won't you?

Pisanio: Yes, sir.

Cloten: Good, good. We understand each other. *(Cloten gives him a gold coin.)* This is for you. I'm your friend now.

Pisanio: Thank you, my lord.

Cloten: Now listen. Do you still have any of Posthumus's clothes?

Pisanio: Yes, my lord. One of his suits. His oldest one.

Cloten: That's fine. I want you to go and get it for me.

Pisanio: Yes, my lord.

(Pisanio goes out.)

Cloten: So! The Princess thinks his oldest suit of clothes is more manly than I am. Well! She's going to pay for that insult. I'm going to go out there to Milford Haven, and I'm going to be wearing that old suit of his. And when I find the two of them–I'm going to murder him right in front of her–and then I'm going to rape her!–Bitch!

(Pisanio returns with the suit.)

Cloten: You got it?

Pisanio: Yes, my lord.

Cloten: Excellent! When did she leave for Milford?

Pisanio: Em, just recently. I don't think she'd be there yet.

Cloten: Good. Take this suit to my room. You're to say nothing about this, understand?

Pisanio: Yes, my lord.

Cloten: I'm going to Milford, and when I catch the two of them–I'll deal with them properly.

(Cloten goes out.)

Pisanio: You won't find her. She'll be gone by the time you get there. *(Looking up)* You gods–watch over her–and throw every obstacle in Cloten's path.

(Pisanio leaves.)

Act 3, Scene 6. *The cottage of Belarius in Wales. Imogen kncoks within and calls "Hello?", then enters. She is wearing men's clothing.*

Imogen: There's nobody here. This is the first cottage I've seen in two days of wandering around. I don't even know where I am. How could I not find Milford Haven? *(Feels her stomach)* I'm so hungry. *(She sees bread on the table.)* I've got to eat something.

(She picks up the bread and eats. Then Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus come in carrying an animal carcass as food.)

Belarius: What's this?

Imogen: Oh!

Guiderius: Are you a thief? We have nothing worth stealing.

Arviragus: It's not nice to break into people's houses.

Imogen: I'm sorry. I didn't mean any harm. I was lost. I was supposed to meet someone at Milford Haven, but I lost my way. I was so hungry. I had to eat something. I knocked, but there was nobody home.

Belarius: What's your name?

Imogen: My name is–Fidele. I'll pay you for the food. I have some money.

Belarius: Ha, ha–no, that's all right. *(To his sons)* We might as well take care of this fellow. *(To Imogen)* My name's Morgan, and these are my sons Polydore and Cadwal.

Guiderius and Arviragus: Hi! *(They shake hands with her.)*

Imogen: Polydore–Cadwal–I am honoured to make your acquaintance.

Belarius: He talks like a city man. *(To Imogen)* A city man lost in the country, eh?

Imogen: Em, yes. You might say so. I don't know this region.

Guiderius (Aside to Arviragus): He looks a bit feminine, don't you think?

Arviragus (Aside to Guiderius): He doesn't have a beard. You know, if he did, he'd look a bit like us, wouldn't he?

Guiderius (Aside to Arviragus): I think you're right.

Imogen (Aside): These boys remind me of my father, for some reason.

Belarius: You're in luck, Fidele. We've got meat for dinner. You can stuff yourself all you want. And then you can tell us your story.

Imogen: Thank you. You're very kind.

(Curtain down without an exit.)

Act 3, Scene 7. *Rome. Two Roman Senators come in with two Tribunes.*

1st Senator: The Emperor has decided that additional forces must be raised to fight the Britons. Lucius has been promoted to proconsul and he will be in command of those forces. The common forces and the legions are occupied elsewhere, so these new forces must be recruited from the gentry. You tribunes will be in charge of that.

1st Tribune: The Emperor can count on us.

2nd Tribune: Hail, Caesar!

Senators: Hail, Caesar!

(The Senators and Tribunes leave separately.)

Act 4, Scene 1. *Wales. Cloten comes in alone. He is armed and is wearing Posthumus's old suit.*

Cloten: Where is that bastard? When I find him I'll cut off his head–and then I'll rape that bitch. The King won't like it, but he'll get over it. After all, she was a traitor. And my mother wears the pants in the family. *(He draws his sword and admires it.)* Fate!–Give them to me! Give me my revenge!

(He walks out as if hunting.)

Act 4, Scene 2. *Wales. In the woods. Belarius, Guiderius, Arviragus, and Imogen (as Fidele) come in.*

Belarius (To Imogen): If you're not feeling well, go back and rest in the cottage, Fidele. After all, you're a city boy. You don't have to hunt.

Guiderius: I can stay with him. I don't mind.

Imogen: Oh, no. I don't want to ruin your day.

Guiderius: I'll be worried about you if you're by yourself. Hey, you know, we like you, Fidele.

Arviragus: Yeah, we do. You're sort of like a brother.

Belarius: A brother?

Arviragus: Yeah, he seems like one. It's funny, but it feels like he should be one of us.

Guiderius: I felt that way as soon as I met him. He could've been our brother.

Belarius: You boys have an imagination, I'll say that. *(Aside)* But who is he really?

Imogen: You're all very kind. But I'll just go back to the cottage and rest. I have some medicine a friend gave me. I'm sure it'll make me feel better. You three go on and enjoy your hunt.

Belarius: We won't be gone too long. We'll see you later.

Imogen: All right.

(Imogen leaves.)

Balerius (Aside): There's something noble about that fellow. I wonder who he really is.

Arviragus: So, dad, is he our long-lost brother?

Guiderius: Yeah, dad. You been keeping this a secret all these years?

Belarius: Ha, ha! He's a good fellow. I like him, too. Come on, let's go catch something for dinner.

(Cloten's voice is heard within: "Where are those runaways? I'll get them!")

Belarius (Aside): I recognize that voice. It's Cloten, the Queen's son. *[Author's note: Yeah, right. He's going to remember after twenty years! Well, that's Shakespeare.] (To his sons)* Sounds like trouble. We should get out of here.

Guiderius: Leave it to me. You two get out of sight. Just circle around and see if he's got other people with him. I'll stay here and deal with him, whoever he is.

Belarius: Be careful.

Arviragus: Yell if you need help.

Guiderius: Don't worry. Just stay nearby.

(Belarius and Arviragus go out. Guiderius draws his sword. Cloten comes in, sword out.)

Cloten: Who the fuck are you, you hillbilly bastard?

Guiderius: Hillbilly bastard? Where the hell do you come from?

Cloten: Somewhere where your type isn't allowed, you fucking retard!

Guiderius: You're going to look pretty funny in about a minute–without a head!

Cloten: You fucker! Do you know who you're talking to? I'm Cloten! I'm the Queen's son!

Guiderius: You don't look like any queen's son to me. Where do you get your clothes–at Goodwill?

Cloten: You scum! I'll kill you!

(They begin fighting, and the fight moves offstage. After a moment, Belarius and Arviragus return.)

Arviragus: There's nobody here. Are you sure you heard Cloten's voice?

Belarius: I could swear it. God, I hope they didn't get into a fight.

Arviragus: Polydore can take care of himself.

Belarius: If he kills Cloten, the King will send soldiers to hunt us down. We'll all be hanged for murder.

(Guiderius comes in carrying Cloten's head.)

Guiderius: He called me a hillbilly bastard!

Belarius: Oh, God! That's the Queen's son!

Guiderius: It was a fair fight. Better him than me.

Belarius: We're in big trouble now.

Guiderius: He started it. It was self-defense.–Is there anyone else around?

Belarius: We didn't see anyone. But I don't think he'd come all this way by himself. Maybe the King heard we were outlaws or something, and he sent soldiers to look for us.

Arviragus: Why would anyone think we were outlaws? Nobody even knows we're here.

Belarius: We can't be sure. There could be rumours. People might be searching the area for something.

Arviragus: If I didn't know better, I'd say you had a guilty conscience about something.

Belarius: No, no, no. I'm just–speculating.

Arviragus: Well, look, Polydore had no choice. *(To Polydore)* Right?

Guiderius: Right.

Belarius (To Guiderius): What're you going to do with him?

Guiderius: I'll throw his head in the river. Maybe it'll wash up somewhere where the Queen finds it–ha!

Belarius: Don't say that!

(Guiderius goes out.)

Arviragus (After him): Good job, bro! I wish I'd done it!

Belarius: Shh!–Listen, you're not to say a word about this. We weren't here. We don't know anything.

Arviragus: Aw, take it easy, dad. Nobody's going to know.

Belarius: Listen, you go back and see how Fidele is and stay there and wait for us. I'll come back with your brother.

Arviragus: Okay.

(Arviragus leaves.)

Belarius: My boys have the instincts of nobles. I guess I shouldn't be surprised.–I'm just worried about Cloten now. This is going to be big trouble.

(Guiderius returns.)

Guiderius: Where's Cadwal? Did he go home?

Belarius: Yes.

Guiderius: I watched Cloten's head float down the river. It would be funny if it floated all the way to London.

Belarius: That's physically impossible! And don't joke about it!

(Arviragus returns, carrying Imogen in his arms, apparently dead. [Author's note: Time and space mean nothing to Shakespeare.])

Arviragus: He's dead!

Guiderius: What happened?

Arviragus: I don't know. I found him unconscious. He's got no signs of life.

Belarius: This is terrible! Terrible! The poor boy! Such a good boy! We never should have left him.

Guiderius: But how did he die? A heart attack, or what?

Arviragus: I have no idea.

(Guiderius strokes Imogen's head.)

Guiderius: I wanted him to live with us–and be our brother.

Arviragus: So did I.–What'll we do–bury him?

Guiderius: We should bury him beside our mother.

[Author's note: Shakespeare's staging becomes very problematic here. He needs Imogen to wake up beside Cloten's headless body and misidentify him as Posthumus. So, obviously, Imogen can't be buried at all. But what reason would there be for laying the two bodies next to each other and leaving them? Shakespeare does not explain this properly, so I have improvised.]

Belarius: You're forgetting Cloten–his body.

Guiderius: Who cares about him? To hell with him. Let him rot.

Belarius: My boy, if he did you wrong, he paid for it. We should take pity on his soul. People will come out searching for him. Let him be found and be taken back to London for a proper burial. And

put Fidele's body next to his. That way, they'll take him as well and give him a proper burial. Somebody in London may know him, and he deserves to rest with his kin. It's the right thing to do.

Guiderius: Okay, if you think so.

Belarius: Yes. Trust me. And we'll just stay away from here. We were never here. We don't know anything.

Guiderius: All right. Then we'll leave Fidele here, and I'll drag Cloten's body.

Belarius: I'll help you.

(Guiderius and Belarius go out. Arviragus kneels beside Imogen's body.)

Arviragus (Holding back tears): Fidele–if only you could've lived. You would've been our brother.

(Guiderius and Belarius return, dragging Cloten's body, which is placed beside Imogen. Arviragus plucks some flowers and places them on Imogen's body. Then the three men stand reverently.)

Belarius: May God forgive whatever sins they may have committed and accept their souls into heaven.

Guiderius and Arviragus: Amen.

(The three men leave. The stage lighting dims slightly, suggesting the passing of the day. Then Imogen awakens. She is groggy.)

Imogen: Milford Haven–which way to Milford Haven?–Oh, my head.–I'm so dizzy.

(She sees Cloten's headless body and is shocked.)

Imogen: What!–My God–There's no head! *(She examines the clothing.)* I know this suit.–It belongs to Posthumus!–Posthumus! *(She thinks.)* Pisanio!–He's the one! He did this! He gave me that drug!–And then–he and Cloten waited for Posthumus–and killed him!–Oh, God!–No!–No!–No!

(She falls on the body, weeping.)

Act 4, Scene 3. *Quick segue from previous scene. (Author's note: I have added a scene break because the staging in Shakespeare's original scene is too clumsy.) In the woods near the previous scene. Coming in are Lucius, two Captains, and the Soothsayer.*

Lucius: Are the legions here from France?

1st Captain: They're here, sir. And the fleet is assembled at Milford Haven.

Lucius: Good. And the reinforcements from Rome?

2nd Captain: They're on the way, sir. The Duke of Siena's brother, Iachimo, is in charge of them.

Lucius: Fine. I think we have the advantage.–Soothsayer, what's your prediction for the war?

Soothsayer: My lord, I dreamed that the great Roman eagle spread its wings and flew over Britain. That means we're going to beat them.

Lucius: Excellent.

(Imogen comes in slowly, head in hands, looking distracted and depressed. The Captains reach for their swords, but Lucius gestures to them to be calm.)

Lucius: Young man, are you all right? *(Imogen is in a fog and doesn't reply.)* Who are you?

Imogen: I am no one, sir.–I am no one without my master.

Lucius: Has something happened?

Imogen: My master was murdered.

Lucius: Good heavens! Who did it?

Imogen: I didn't see. They must have been outlaws. *[Author's note: Imogen lies in this scene to avoid trouble. She still wants to hide her identity and maintain her disguise.]* His body is back there. *(She points.)*

Lucius (To the Captains): Go look.

(The Captains go out.)

Lucius: Who was your master?

Imogen: His name was–du Champ.

Lucius: British?

Imogen: Yes, sir. He was–he was good to me. I loved him.

Lucius: And what is your name?

Imogen: Fidele.

(The Captains return and whisper to Lucius, who reacts momentarily with shock.)

Lucius: I'm very sorry about your master, Fidele. We'll bury him here. We can't take his body with us.

Imogen: Thank you, sir.

Lucius: Do you have anywhere you can go?

Imogen: No, sir. I have no home any more. I have nowhere to go.–Perhaps you would take me on as a servant.

Lucius: All right. You seem like an honest fellow. You can be my page. I don't know if you'll like me as much as Lord du Champ, but you'll be well-treated, I promise you.

Imogen: Thank you, sir. I am grateful.

Lucius: Now wipe your eyes and think of happier days ahead. *(To the Captains)* Get some men and bury the body.

(The Captains salute and go out. Then Lucius, Imogen, and the Soothsayer go out slowly.)

Act 4, Scene 4. *(This is Scene 3 in the original.) Britain. Cymbeline comes in with two Lords and Pisanio. A conversation is in progress.*

Cymbeline: What a mess! *(To the First Lord)* Go check on the Queen.

(The First Lord goes out.)

Cymbeline: Nothing but problems! Cloten's gone, and nobody knows were. The Queen is sick with worry. Imogen's gone, and nobody knows where she is either–although I have a feeling she ran off to Rome to look for Posthumus. And worst of all, we have to deal with a Roman invasion.–You! Pisanio! You know something about Imogen! You've been holding out on me!

Pisanio: No, my lord. I swear I don't know where she is.

2nd Lord: Pisanio was here when Imogen went missing, my lord. And as for Cloten, there are poeple out looking for him. I'm sure they'll find him eventually.

Cymbeline: I really don't need all this shit happening at the same time.–Pardon my language. *(To Pisanio)* I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt for now. But don't test my patience.

Pisanio: Yes, my lord. Thank you, my lord.

Cymbeline: The Romans have already landed. I wish the Queen were here to advise me. She always knows what to do.

2nd Lord: You have enough forces to meet the threat, my lord. They're just waiting for your orders.

Cymbeline: Yes, yes, I know.–I suppose we'll be all right.–I just don't feel lucky right now.–Anyway, come with me.

(Cymbeline goes out with the Second Lord, leaving Pisanio alone.)

Pisanio (To the audience): I've heard nothing from Posthumus since I wrote him to say that Imogen was dead. I sent him a bloody handkerchief for proof. *(He shows a bandage on his arm.)* And I've heard nothing from her either, so I have no idea where she is. And as for Cloten, who knows where he is? Only the gods know what's going on–and what's going to happen. I just have to have faith.

(He leaves.)

Act 4, Scene 5. *(This is Scene 4 in the original.) Wales. Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus come in. Distant sounds of marching armies.*

Guiderius: You hear that? Listen. *(Sounds of marching)* Romans and Brits marching.

Belarius: We've got to hide up in the mountains. That's the safest place.

Guiderius: What's the point of hiding? If the Romans find us, they might kill us anyway.

Belarius: I'm more worried about the Brits. They might connect us with Cloten's death.

Arviragus: Why should they waste time on us when they've got the Romans to worry about?

Belarius: Look, boys, I'm known back in London. The King's not my friend. I don't want to be recognized.

Guiderius: Nobody's going to recognize you after all these years. I want to join the Brits. I want to fight on their side.

Arviragus: Me, too. I'm not going to hide like a coward. We're British. We should fight.

Belarius: Oh, boys, boys, boys–

Guiderius: Dad, we're going with or without you. It's your choice.

Belarius: Oh, God.–*(He considers.)* Since you're so set on it–all right. Your fate will be my fate. Let's go, then.

(They all leave.)

Act 5, Scene 1. *Britain. Posthumus comes in alone, wearing a Roman uniform.*

Posthumus: What an irony! I get drafted into the Roman army and now I have to fight against my own country. *(He holds up the bloody handkerchief.)* Pisanio, just once I wish you had disobeyed me.–Now she's dead.–Better the fates had killed me instead. I'm the one who deserves to die. Why should I fight for Rome when I've already done so much harm to Britain? There's only one thing for me to do.–Take off this uniform and dress like a peasant–and fight on the British side. I won't mind if the Romans kill me. I'd be glad if they did. I really don't want to live any more.

(He leaves.)

Act 5, Scene 2. *Britain. (Author's note: Shakespeare's stage directions for this scene are very awkward. I've simplified the scene.) Sounds of battle. Roman soldiers drag Cymbeline across the stage as a prisoner. Then Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus come in to rescue him. They fight with the Romans. The fight is even until Posthumus rushes in to help the Britons. The Romans flee.*

Guiderius (Assisting Cymbeline): You're safe, my lord. Come with us.

Cymbeline: Thank you, lads!

(They all leave. Then Lucius, Iachimo, and Imogen come in. Imogen is still disguised as Fidele.)

Lucius: They're giving us a hell of a fight. This is worse than I expected.

Iachimo: They're getting help from the locals. They're not even professional soldiers. I almost got killed by some bloody peasant. He let me go, believe it or not.

Lucius: We can still win. There's a narrow pass down there. If we can force them into it, we'll have the advantage. But we need to concentrate our forces.–Fidele, this is no place for you. I don't want you to get hurt. You have to get away from the fighting.–Iachimo, follow me.

(They leave, Imogen separately.)

Act 5, Scene 3. *Elsewhere near the battlefield. Posthumus and a British Lord come in from opposite sides.*

Lord: Hello! Were you, em–out there? *(He points.)*

Posthumus: You mean, the battlefield?

Lord: Yes.

Posthumus: Yes. I was there. I think I saw you running away, though.–Didn't I?

Lord: Em, I don't know. It's possible.

Posthumus. Well, I can understand. Our flanks collapsed and everyone was trying to escape through the only pass available. It was too narrow. We were getting slaughtered.

Lord: My God!

Posthumus: It would have been the end for us, except for one old man and his two sons. They weren't even soldiers. They were just country folk. The old man shouted to everyone to turn and make a stand, and then he and his sons led the troops against the Romans and broke their formation. It was totally unexpected. Bravest thing I ever saw. You should have been there.

Lord: I, uh–I must have been elsewhere.

(Posthumus gives him a long, contemptuous look.)

Lord: You seem disappointed in me.

Posthumus: No more than any other coward.

Lord (Stiffly): You are not of my social class. I take my leave of you.

(The Lord leaves, offended.)

Posthumus: There goes a lord of Britain. Too afraid of dying.–As for me, I want to die and I can't. At least, not as a Brit. I should go back to the Roman side and let the Brits kill me, since they seem to be winning. I won't even try to defend myself.–It's what I deserve for what I did to Imogen.

(Posthumus goes to one side of the stage and removes his peasant clothing and shows his Roman garb underneath. Two British Captains and some Soldiers come in slowly from the opposite side. They doen't notice Posthumus at first.)

1st Captain: What a turnaround! We captured Lucius! I wish I knew who that old man was–and his two sons. They were fantastic!

2nd Captain: And there was another guy helping them. He looked like a peasant.

1st Captain: Yeah. They were all commoners. They should get medals for what they did.–*(Sees Posthumus)* Hold it! You there! Come here!

(Posthumus approaches.)

1st Captain: Who are you?

Posthumus: A Roman.

2nd Captain: A Roman! *(He grabs Posthumus, with the Soldiers assisting.)* You're our prisoner now!

Posthumus: Okay, I'm your prisoner. What are you going to do, kill me?

2nd Captain: No, we'll hand you over to the King. He'll decide what's to be done with you.–Come on.

(They all leave. [Author's note: In the original, Shakespeare adds stage directions here that may have been intended for a short scene that was never written. I have deleted them as unnecessary.])

Act 5, Scene 4. *Britain. Curtain up finds Posthumus alone in prison.*

Posthumus: You gods, I'm not afraid to die. Only death will relieve my conscience. *(Sighs)* Oh, Imogen–if I could only see you again.–I guess I will on the other side.

(Posthumus falls asleep. Ethereal music is heard. Coming in are four Apparitions: Sicilius Leonatus, his father, dressed as an old soldier; his Mother; and his two Brothers. They look at Posthumus sadly. [Many of the following speeches are addressed to Jupiter.])

Sicilius: Jupiter, does my son deserve this? Have you no pity? We never met in life. I died while he was still in his mother's womb. You should have been watching over him. You're supposed to be the father of all orphans.

Mother: An orphan indeed–the poor boy! I died giving birth to him.

Sicilius: He came from good stock, you know. He's a Leonatus–like his two brothers.

1st Brother: My brother. There was no one better in all of Britain. Imogen could see what a good man he was.

Mother: Aye! He shouldn't have been exiled for marrying her. That was very wrong.

2nd Brother: I hope you're listening, Jupiter! My father and brother and I all died serving our country. We were always loyal. We're appealing to you, Jupiter!

1st Brother: You saw how bravely he fought for his king. Are you going to ignore that? He deserves a break, don't you think?

Sicilius: Enough is enough, Jupiter! We're spirits. You should be listening to us.

Mother: Help him now!

2nd Brother: You're the King of the Gods! You're the big boss! We want some action!

(Thunder and lightning. Jupiter descends with a squeaking sound on a chair fashioned like an eagle.)

Jupiter: All right, already! Quit your bitching!–This is what I get for being King of the Gods. Everyone expects me to solve their problems.–Now, look. What happens on earth with people is my

business, not yours. You're just supposed to enjoy the afterlife and float around in the clouds and sing my praises and stuff like that.

Sicilius: Yes, but who else are we going to complain to? I'm his father.

Mother: And I'm his mother.

Brothers: And we're his brothers.

Jupiter: I know, I know. Now, look, I haven't forgotten him. In face, I've been following his case very closely. You know the way I operate. I don't give instant gratification. I always make things a bit rough for the people I really like so that when I do help them, it'll seem more, you know, god-like.– Here. This is a prophecy for him. Just put it next to him and he'll find it when he wakes up. *(Jupiter gives Sicilius a paper, which Sicilius places beside Posthumus.)* Now stop worrying and let me handle this. Everything will turn out all right, and he'll get back with Imogen. Okay?

Sicilius: Thank you, Jupiter.

Others: Thank you, Jupiter.

Jupiter: Okay, I'm going back to heaven. *(He slaps the eagle on the head.)* Come on, up! *(He starts ascending slowly, with squeaking.)* Faster! Come on, move it! I haven't got all day, you stupid bird!

(Jupiter leaves, ascending.)

Sicilius: Okay, that was good. You see? It pays to complain.

1st Brother: Way to go, dad!

Sicilius: Okay, let's cut out.

(The four Apparitions leave. Then Posthumus wakes up.)

Posthumus: God, what a weird dream!–I saw my father and mother, and my two brothers who died in the old war. And Jupiter came down, and he–*(Notices the paper beside him)*–What's this? *(He reads.)* "When a lion's cub shall be embraced by a piece of tender air, and when the dead branches chopped off of a stately cedar shall be rejoined to it and grow again, then shall Posthumus see his miseries end, and Britain shall flouish in peace and good fortune."– What the heck does that mean?

(The Jailer comes in.)

Jailer: Sir, it's your time.

Posthumus: All right.

Jailer: Think of it as an end to all your miseries and all your debts.

Posthumus: It's okay, you don't have to comfort me. I'm ready to die. I have no problem with it.

Jailer: I never heard a condemned man say that, sir. After all, you don't know which way you're going *(Indicating up or down)*.

Posthumus: I know, all right.

(A Messenger comes in.)

Messenger: The King wants to see this one first.

Jailer: The King does?

Posthumus: He probably wants to have the last word. That's okay.

(The Messenger takes Posthumus out.)

Jailer: What an odd duck! Doesn't seem the least concerned. He's not the worst fellow I evcr met, even if he is a Roman.–Tsk! If only all men would be good!–But then I'd be out of a job!

(The Jailer leaves.)

Act 5, Scene 5. *The court of Cymbeline. Coming in are Cymbeline, Belarius, Guiderius, Arviragus, Pisanio, and Lords.*

Cymbeline: You three–Morgan, Polydore, and Cadwal–you stand here next to me. You saved my life. You're heroes.

Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus: Thank you, my lord.

Cymbeline: I wish we could find that other guy–that peasant. He's a hero, too.

Belarius: He may have been a peasant, my lord, but he fought like a true noble.

Cymbeline: He sure did. That's the stuff this country is made of.–Doesn't anyone know where he is?–Pisanio?

Pisanio: He hasn't been seen anywhere, my lord. We don't even know if he's dead or alive.

Cymbeline: Well, maybe he'll turn up.–As for you three, I'm curious to know where you're from.

Belarius: We're just humble shepherds from Wales, my lord.

Cymbeline: Well, you've done a great service to the kingdom, and for that you're going to get a reward. Please kneel. *(They kneel. Cymbeline taps them on the shoulders with his sword.)* You are now knights of Britain and Companions to the King, with all the dignities that go with it. You may rise.

(They rise. Belarius hugs his sons.)

Belarius: My sons!

(Cornelius comes in with two of the Queen's Ladies. He looks grim.)

Cornelius: My lord.

Cymbeline: What's the matter, Cornelius?

Cornelius: I'm sorry to tell you, but–*(The Ladies begin crying.)*–The Queen, my lord–she's dead.

Cymbeline: What happened?

Cornelius: My lord, as her physician, I can only say that she died of grief–and madness.

Cymbeline: Because of Cloten? We still don't know where he is.

Cornelius: She grieved for Cloten, my lord–but there was more to it.

Cymbeline: You must tell me.

Cornelius: My lord, her ladies are here to vouch for the truth of what I'm about to tell you. The Queen confessed–that she never really loved you. She only married you to put Cloten on the throne someday. And then when your daughter wouldn't marry him, she vowed to eliminate her. She wanted to poison her, but your daughter ran away first. Then she intended to poison you and put Cloten on the throne, but then he ran away. And when he didn't come back, she felt hopeless. She had nothing to live for.– That's all I can tell you, my lord.

Cymbeline (To the Ladies): And this is all true?

Ladies: Yes, my lord.

(Pause for effect.)

Cymbeline: I loved her, and I trusted her. I never would have imagined she was capable of anything evil.–Perhaps Imogen knew her better than I did.

(At this point, the Roman prisoners are brought in–first Lucius, Iachimo, the Soothsayer, and Imogen [as Fidele], then Posthumus behind–all escorted by Guards.)

Cymbeline: Ah–the Romans.–For all the brave Britons who died in battle, retribution is the tribute we must collect from you–Lucius!

Lucius (Very dignified): My lord, the battle could have gone either way. If we had won, we would not have threatened British prisoners with death. But if you insist on executing us, we will accept our fate as true Romans are expected to. I would not plead for clemency for myself, but I will plead for it for my page. He is British. I took him on as a kindness because his master had been slain and he had nowhere to go. He has been excellent in his service to me, and he has done no harm to any of your people. If you have any respect for me, then grant me this one request and spare this young man.

(Lucius holds Imogen beside him. Cymbeline gives Imogen a long, curious look. Belarius and his two sons also nudge each other.)

Cymbeline: There's something familiar about him. I could swear I've seen him before.–Young man, I don't know why I'm doing this. It's not because of Lord Lucius. It's just something about you. I like your face. I'm going to spare you. And more than that, I'll grant you a favour. Anything you want.

Imogen: I thank your Majesty.

Lucius (To Imogen): You don't have to beg for my life.

Imogen: I wasn't going to, sir. There's something more important that I have to do.

(She looks intensely at Iachimo.)

Cymbeline: What is it, boy? Do you know this fellow? Is he kin to you?

Imogen: Hardly kin to me, sir. He's not even British.

Cymbeline: Well, what, then?

Imogen: I would like to tell you privately, my lord, if you'll grant me a moment.

Cymbeline: Yes, of course. Come along. *(He gestures for Imogen to move apart with him.)* What's your name?

Imogen: Fidele, my lord.

(Belarius and his sons react to the name Fidele. Cymbeline and Imogen walk to one side and talk privately. Belarius and his sons speak in low voices.)

Belarius: Did you hear that?–Fidele.–Has he come back from the dead?

Arviragus: I don't know. He looks just like the fellow we left for dead.

Guiderius: Exactly alike. I could swear it's him.

Belarius: But if it was him, he would have spoken to us. Listen, don't say anything. We're probably mistaken. It must be a coincidence.

Pisanio (Aside): I know it's Imogen. But I'll keep my mouth shut and let her decide when she wants to reveal herself.

(Cymbeline and Imogen return.)

Cymbeline (To Iachimo): You. Come here.

Iachimo (Nervously): Me, sir?

Cymbeline: Yes, you. This young man wants to question you, and you'd better tell the truth.

Imogen (To Iachimo): Where did you get that diamond ring?

Posthumus (Aside): Why should he care?

(Iachimo hesitates.)

Cymbeline: Come on, answer him. Where did you get it?

Iachimo: I–I won this ring–dishonestly–in a wager–for which I'm very sorry.–This ring belonged to Posthumus Leonatus, whom you banished. He's a good man, sir. I did him wrong. I feel very ashamed now.

Cymbeline: Tell me how you were dishonest.

(Iachimo appears ready to faint.)

Cymbeline: Don't faint if you want to live. You must tell me everything.

Iachimo: My lord–it was in Rome. He praised the virtues of his wife–your daughter, the Princess. I was feeling quite full of myself. I wanted to cut him down a notch. So I made a bet with him that I could seduce her. I bet half my estate against his diamond ring. So then I came here with a letter of introduction and met your daughter. You may remember seeing me.

Cymbeline: Possibly. Go on.

Iachimo: Your daughter rejected me. It was impossible to seduce her. But I didn't want to return to Rome as a loser. So I tricked your daughter. I hid in her room. When she was asleep, I stole her bracelet, and I noticed a small mark on her body. When I returned to Rome, I showed the bracelet to Leonatus and described the mark on her body, and that was my proof that I had seduced her. He believed me.

(Posthumus steps forward.)

Posthumus: You bastard! You rotten scum! It was because of you that I–

Iachimo (Recognizing him): Oh! It's him!

Posthumus: Yeah, you know me now, don't you? Iachimo, you're a villain, because you're a liar and a cheat.–But I'm worse–because I'm a murderer. *(To Cymbeline)* My lord, I deserve to die, and you can do it any way you like. It doesn't matter.

Cymbeline: Who are you? I don't understand.

Posthumus: Have you forgotten so soon what I look like, my lord–or did you simply block me out of your mind? I'm Posthumus Leonatus. And I'm responsible for Imogen's death. I gave orders to Pisanio to take her to Milford Haven and kill her.

Cymbeline: You did that? Why?

Posthumus: I thought she had been unfaithful. I was angry. *(He breaks out in tears.)* Imogen!

Cymbeline: Pisanio!

Pisanio: I didn't! I didn't kill her!

(Imogen runs to Posthumus.)

Imogen: My lord! I thought you were–

Posthumus (Not recognizing her): Leave me alone!

(He pushes her away. She falls down hard.)

Pisanio: Oh! My mistress!–My lord Posthumus, this is Imogen!

(Pisanio rushes to help her up.)

Cymbeline: What!

Posthumus (To Pisanio): You said you killed her!

Pisanio: I lied, sir!–Your Majesty, this is Imogen!

Cymbeline: Imogen! She's alive?

Pisanio: Madam, are you all right?

(Imogen slaps Pisanio.)

Imogen: You gave me poison!

Pisanio: The Queen gave me that box of medicine. She said it was good.

Cymbeline: Oh!

Imogen: It knocked me out.

Cornelius: I can explain this. It wasn't poison. The Queen asked me to make poison for her so she could kill vermin. But I didn't trust her. I gave her some drugs that would only knock a person out for a while and make them seem dead. *(To Imogen)* It was in a box–about this size. *(He indicates.)* Is that what you took?

Imogen: Yes.

Belarius (Aside to his Sons): That explains it.

Posthumus: Imogen! *(He embraces her, weeping.)* I'm sorry I doubted you. I'm sorry–

Imogen: Oh, my lord!

Posthumus: I'll never leave you again.

Cymbeline: My daughter–can you forgive your father for being such a fool?

(They embrace.)

Cymbeline: The bad news is that the Queen has died.

Imogen: I'm sorry for her.

Cymbeline: She was wicked. It was because of her that all these things happened. Cloten disappeared, and it made her mad with grief. We still don't know where he is.

Pisanio: He went out to Milford Haven to look for the Princess and Posthumus. I showed him a letter Posthumus wrote to her, telling her to meet him there. Cloten wanted to catch them both–probably to kill them. He dressed himself in one of Posthumus's old suits. I knew I was sending him on a wild goose chase. I knew she'd be gone before he got there. But what happened to him out there, I don't know.

Guiderius: I can tell you what happened. I killed him.

Cymbeline: What!–He was a prince!

Guiderius: He was a jerk. He picked a fight with me, and I gave him what he deserved. I cut off his head.

Imogen: The corpse without a head! I thought it was Posthumus because of the suit!

Cymbeline: Young man, you killed a prince of the kingdom. I can't let that pass, even if he offended you. This is a capital offense. *(To the Guards)* Take him away and lock him up.

(The Guards take hold of Guiderius.)

Belarius: No! Wait! You mustn't!–My lord, my son is better than Cloten was. Don't execute him.

Cymbeline: Old man, don't exhaust my goodwill. Do you defend a murderer? Do you want to share his punishment?

Belarius: My lord–the time has come to tell you something. I never wanted to reveal this secret, but now I must–even if it puts me in danger.

Arviragus: Your danger is ours, father.

Guiderius: We all live or die together, father.

Belarius: Boys, this is something I kept secret from you.–My lord, there was once a man in your court named Belarius.

Cymbeline: Belarius! I remember him. I banished him as a traitor. That was a long time ago.

Belarius: Yes, he was banished, but he was no traitor. He was accused falsely.

Cymbeline: And how would you know?

Belarius: Because what he is, I am, too.

Cymbeline: Then you condemn yourself, old man.

Belarius: Would you condemn your own sons, my lord?

Cymbeline: What do you mean–my sons?

Belarius: These sons of mine–are really yours.

Guiderius and Arviragus: What!–What do you mean, father?

Cymbeline: What the devil are you talking about?

Belarius: I am Belarius.

Guiderius and Arviragus: What!

Belarius: My boys know me as Morgan. And I named them Polydore and Cadwal. They never knew their true origins. The one they believed was their mother was Euriphile. Yes, I married her, but she was not their real mother.

Cymbeline: Euriphile?–The nurse?

Belarius: Yes, my lord. When you banished me, I told her to take your baby boys and run away with me. I raised them faithfully and taught them everything I know. You can punish me, but don't punish them. Polydore is your son Guiderius. And Cadwal is Arviragus.

(Pause for effect. Everyone is in shock. Cymbeline is deeply moved and on the verge of tears.)

Cymbeline (Softly, to Guiderius): Guiderius had a little mole on his neck–like a star.–Right here *(Indicating on his own neck).*

Guiderius: I have such a mole.

(Guiderius pulls down his collar and shows his mole to Cymbeline. Cymbeline weeps and hugs his two sons.)

Cymbeline: My sons–my sons–. Belarius, thank you.–Imogen, I'm afraid you won't inherit the kingdom now.

Imogen: It doesn't matter, father. I've found my brothers.

Guiderius and Arviragus: Sister!

(The three siblings embrace.)

Arviragus: She was dressed like a man when we met her, my lord.

Guiderius: She called herself Fidele. We both thought she could have been our brother.

Arviragus: Yes, we both said so.–And then we found her dead in the cottage–or so we thought.

Imogen: I drank that medicine.–Pisanio, I'm sorry I accused you.

Pisanio: It's all right, madam.

(Cymbeline is a bit faint.)

Cymbeline: This is all too much for me. There are so many things I want to know–all the details.–But first we'll go to the temple and give thanks to the gods.–Belarius, today you are my brother.

Imogen: And you shall be my second father, Belarius.

Belarius: Then I have two princes–and a princess–ha, ha!

Cymbeline: I almost forgot.–The Roman prisoners are free. I grant amnesty to all.

Lucius: Thank you, my lord.

Cymbeline: Belarius, what about that brave peasant who helped rescue me?

(Belarius, Guiderius, and Arviragus look at Posthumus as they confer in whispers. Belarius points to Posthumus.)

Belarius: My lord, I could swear–

Posthumus: Yes, it was me, my lord–in yet another disguise. And Iachimo will vouch for it.–Won't you, Iachimo?

Iachimo: Yes.

Posthumus: We met on the battlefield, and I could've killed you.

Iachimo: Why didn't you?

Posthumus: I didn't think you deserved to die like a hero.

(Iachimo kneels at Posthumus's feet.)

Iachimo: But I deserve to die nonetheless. Here is your ring–and the bracelet I stole from the Princess. *(He gives Posthumus the ring and the bracelet.)* I'm sorry. I repent. With this I clear my conscience–if I must die.

(Cymbeline, Posthumus, and Imogen exchange looks.)

Posthumus: I forgive you, Iachimo. But, of course, the King must decide.

(Iachimo kneels to Cymbeline.)

Cymbeline: We're too happy today to send anyone to the gallows. You're forgiven.

(Iachimo rises.)

Iachimo: Thank you, my lord! The gods preserve you!

Arviragus (To Posthumus): You helped us on the battlefield like a brother. And now it turns out you really are one.

Guiderius: Husband to our sister!

Posthumus: My lord Lucius, perhaps your soothsayer can explain this prophecy. *(He takes out the paper.)* I found it next to me in the prison cell. I dreamed that Jupiter left it for me.

Lucius: Soothsayer!

(The Soothsayer steps forward and takes the paper and studies it.)

Soothsayer: Ah–yes.–You are the lion's cub, my lord Leonatus. And the tender air is the virtuous Princess, of course. *(To Cymbeline)* And the dead branches of the stately cedar are your sons, sir, whom you believed to be dead, but who are at last rejoined to you alive.–And the miseries of Posthumus Leonatus are at an end. And Britain shall flourish in peace and good fortune.

Cymbeline: Peace! Yes!–Jupiter has spoken, Lucius. There must be peace between Britain and Rome.

Lucius: I would never argue with Jupiter, my lord. And neither would my emperor.

Cymbeline: Then it is agreed we will have peace. And to seal it, I will pay to Caesar the tribute which is owed. It was the Queen's idea to stop paying, but the gods have punished her.

Lucius: In behalf of Caesar, I thank you, my lord.

Soothsayer (To Lucius): My lord, now I understand properly the dream I had before the battle. The eagle of Rome soared above Britain not to conquer but to unite Caesar's favour with King Cymbeline.

Lucius: I wish you'd gotten it right the first time. You would have saved us a lot of trouble.

Soothsayer: These things are so complicated, sir.

(General laughter.)

Cymbeline: To the temple of Jupiter! Let's go and give thanks. And after that–I think we are allowed to get rather drunk.

(Sounds of approval. All go out happily.)

END

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